

PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Injection and extrusion moulding are the most widely-used production techniques, because of their versatility. Blowing is becoming increasingly common, as advanced packaging products become more popular. Blowing is required because of the increased use of some new plastics and resins such as polyethylene terephthalate (PET).

The industry has been forced to modernize in the face of foreign competition. Imports of plastics production machinery more than doubled to US \$232 million between 1990 and 1994 according to the *Asociación Nacional de las Industrias del Plástico (ANIPAC)*, National Association of the Plastics Industry, data. The largest increases were for injection moulding equipment (312 percent), vacuum forming machinery (243 percent), blow moulding equipment (227 percent) and extruders (163 percent). Other more sophisticated processes are now being introduced, including laminating, rotational moulding, foaming, compression, coating, metalizing and electro-chroming.

MODERNIZATION OF THE PLASTICS SECTOR

MACHINERY IMPORTS

US \$ MILLIONS

	1990	1992	1994
Injection moulding machinery	31.1	48.8	97.1
Extruders	17.8	25.6	29.1
Blow moulding machinery	24.6	36.7	55.9
Vacuum forming machinery	12.1	15.8	29.4
Auxiliary equipment	6.8	14.5	20.7
Total	92.4	141.4	232.2

Source: *Asociación Nacional de las Industrias del Plástico (ANIPAC)*, National Association of the Plastics Industry. 1995 Annual Report.

Plastics-making equipment is mostly imported, primarily from American and European sources. According to the United States Department of Commerce, the United States had a 43 percent market share in 1993, followed by Italy with 16 percent and Taiwan with 12 percent. Industry experts interviewed for this profile said that Husky is the only major Canadian company active in the Mexican plastics equipment market. They add that the company's products are highly regarded. Mexican-made equipment is considered technically inferior to imports.